THE PURITAN SPIRIT

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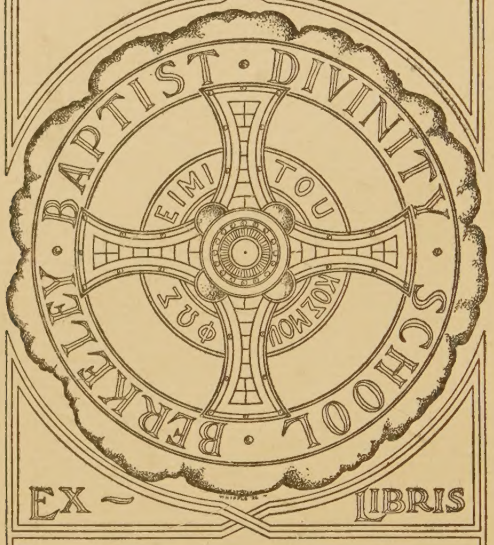

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The Puritan Spirit

BY

RICHARD SALTER STORRS, D.D., LL.D.

AN ORATION delivered before The Congregational Club in Tremont Temple Boston 18th December 1889 and published by their request

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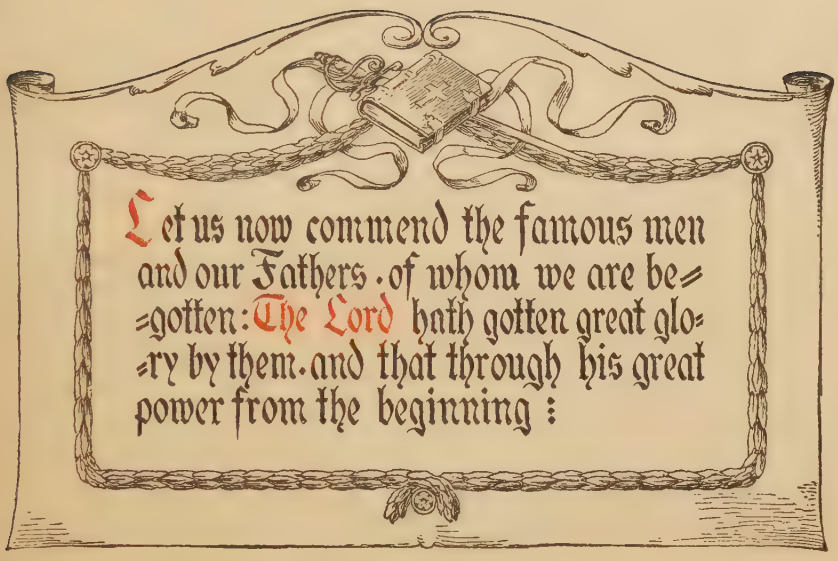
Let us now commend the famous men
and our Fathers . of whom we are be=
=gotten: The Lord hath gotten great glo=
=ry by them . and that through his great
power from the beginning :

The Puritan Spirit

AN ORATION

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen: — When I rashly yielded to the request of your Committee, and promised to deliver an address before the Congregational Club on this occasion, I expected it to be that comparatively simple and informal thing which one styles familiarly an Address; delivered before a company of a few hundred persons, many of them, doubtless, my personal friends. I did not anticipate that in the air of Boston, a sup of which the early immigrants declared equal to a draught of English ale, and in the exuberant fancy of the Committee, what I had proposed might

> —— "suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange,"

and be set forth to the public as an Oration, gathering this vast assembly by which I am partly animated but chiefly appalled. However, you will not forget, I am sure, my modest promise; and if I can not conduct you, as I can not, through any House Beautiful, such as Boston Orations are known and are expected

to be, you will let me introduce you to an unobtrusive and commonplace structure of thought, such as may reasonably bear upon its low and unadorned lintel the name "Address."

I
THE NEED OF THE PURITAN SPIRIT

It is often said by those who desire the highest welfare of the nation, and who feel that to such welfare right moral and spiritual forces are first of all needful, that what this country chiefly needs, to maintain and exalt its place in the world, is a larger measure of the Puritan spirit, in energetic development and in wide distribution.

Fundamentally, the vast effort, pursued now for a hundred years, to plant churches at the West, with schools, colleges, seminaries of whatever class, to inspire and mold instruction there, has had in this feeling its impulse and motive; and its value has been estimated, by those who have made it, by its success in this direction. The same thing is substantially true of the similar efforts now being made, with unsurpassed patience and energy, at the South and in the New West. The effort is to practically New Englandize the continent; and however it has changed in our time, in

its special forms of manifestation, the Puritan spirit is that which has given to New England its characteristic place and power in the vastly enlarged national organism. The many institutions, of rising rank and growing power, all over the vast area of the country, show the energy of this impulse, with its partial and perhaps its prophetic success.

II
Opposition to the Puritan Spirit

On the other hand, however, hardly any proposal meets fiercer opposition in many quarters than does this very one. "It is precisely this Puritan spirit," multitudes say, "which we do *not* want. It would be well if it could be practically extirpated in New England itself. To carry it through the country would be to fetter and pervert the whole development of the nation, and to embarrass or thwart its career. It may easily bring about a popular revolution. We need to move, distinctly and purposely, in the opposite direction; to break away from restraints, to emerge finally from the earlier glooms, and to secure on all sides ampler tolerance, larger freedom of opinion and custom. The contrary effort will be vain, and may be destructive, forcing a fierce, if not a fatal, explosion."

Probably this feeling was never wider or more energetic than it is at this hour. The incessant inrush of immigration from abroad adds constantly to its volume. The expansion of population over wider spaces increases its extensiveness, if not its intensity. As secular interests become more prominent, and the towers of exchanges, newspaper offices, insurance and telegraph buildings, surpass and dwarf the spires of churches, it naturally increases; and as men depart further from the inherited faith of their fathers, either in the direction of Vaticanism on the one hand, or of agnosticism on the other, this feeling becomes more keen and controlling. In regard to no one subject, therefore, affecting our national development and career, is the contest fiercer than in regard to this; and few signs appear that it is to subside, for years to come, in any general harmony of judgment.

III
Wide Area of the Puritan Spirit

It may be worth while, then, to consider particularly what it is which really constitutes, and effectively differentiates, the Puritan spirit; and to look at this as it has widely appeared in the world, not merely or mainly in this province of New England. New England is

an important district, though it may not appear as vast as it once did, when one has lived for forty-odd years outside its bounds. But it is certainly by no means considerable, as territorially related to the surface of the earth, or even of the continent. Two hundred and seventy years are a considerable period of time, but they dwindle to insignificance before the recorded centuries of history.

Perhaps enough has been said of the Puritan spirit as it has appeared in these immediate delightful surroundings. It has been sketched in poetry, and in picturesque prose, in philosophical discussion, and with elaborate eloquence, with witty jest and in fascinating fiction; sometimes, perhaps, with extravagant eulogy, and sometimes, we know, with extraordinary force of hatred and derision. There are those around me, on this platform, who have contributed memorably to this discussion, with ample learning, in admirable utterance, with a just enthusiasm for those whose blood they have inherited, and whose names they have nobly adorned. It is not necessary, and it is not at all my present purpose, to add to this special profuse dis-

cussion. Let us look, rather, at the Puritan spirit as it has asserted itself at large, on an ampler area, in the broader ranges of general history. We may there see it more clearly, perhaps; as one sees a mountain, in its majestic and harmonious outlines, most distinctly from a distance, not from its base, or from the sides or shoulders of it; — the Oberland group, from the terrace at Berne; the Graian or the Pennine Alps, from the streets of Turin, or from the cathedral roof at Milan.

IV
Elements of the Puritan Spirit

Our first question must naturally be: What are the elements vitally involved in the distinctive Puritan spirit, as that has hitherto and in general experience appeared in the world? Let us disengage these, as far as we may, from individual traits, which are as various as the millionfold crinkles along a coast, and survey them impersonally, before we regard them in particular examples.

The spirit, as such, is not to be identified, of course, with any specific form either of doctrine or of worship, since it has appeared in connection with many, and has continued positive and permanent, while they have been widely and variously changed. The elements

involved in it are essentially moral, and earnestly practical, not theoretical; and they are not difficult to ascertain and exhibit.

1. An intense conviction of apprehended truth

The first is, I think we all shall agree, an intense conviction of that which is apprehended as truth, with a consequent desire to maintain and extend it, and to bring all others, if possible, to affirm it.

It by no means follows, you observe, that what is thus apprehended *is* truth, or is truth in harmonious and complete exhibition. No man, or body of men, according to our conception of things, is infallible on all subjects, or even on any, history being witness; and very different forms of thought have at different times drawn to themselves the intense conviction of human minds. It is the vigor, the moral energy of the conviction, which belongs to and which characterizes the Puritan spirit.

Usually, this concerns supremely moral or religious propositions, rather than those which are political or philosophical; though the latter may no doubt take occasional supremacy, as being involved in the others, or closely associated with them. Usually, too, it is founded, you will notice, on personal inquiry,

individual reflection, not on traditional impressions or external instruction ; while, very largely, it takes its aggressive and resolute force from personal experience, which seems, of course, to give an assurance that nothing else can. So the conviction is sharp-set and energetic, however narrow it may seem to those who do not share it. It may be wanting, as not unfrequently it has been, in breadth of view, and in clearness of perspective ; but it is never wavering or weak. It is naturally uncompromising toward what contradicts it ; and it perhaps too easily makes one impatient of divergence in opinion, liable to suspect moral error in those not mentally agreeing with it. It is not particularly catholic in temper, and not usually conciliatory in forms of expression ; and to those who do not have definite, urgent, and sovereign opinions, it may easily seem imperious and harsh, repellently arrogant.

But it becomes, by reason of its strength, a very positive power in the world of thought. It leads one to risk much on his convictions, to be utterly bold on their behalf, and to be ready to stand or fall with them before God and the universe : and in this is always dignity and

power. It is in exact antithesis — this distinctive Puritan spirit — to that indifferent, pyrrhonic temper, always popular in the world, and never more so than in our time, which thinks one opinion about as good as another — this more probable, perhaps, that more doubtful, but no one of all absolutely and certainly true.

An accomplished friend of mine, somewhat critical perhaps of accepted opinions, once heard a sermon from an eminent divine of New England, on the character of Judas, in which the sordid and treacherous meanness of the apostate apostle, ripening into stupendous crime, was traced with a touch as delicate and vivid as the severity was unsparing. As he passed from the church, a friend said to him, "What a terrific discourse that was! so true to the record, so true to life, and so startlingly true to the secrets of sin!" "Yes," was his reply, "it was certainly a tremendous summing up against Judas; but some things, I think, might fairly be said upon the other side." That is always the temper which is restless in conclusions, which doubts whatever it does not see, and which can accept no result of thought as beyond the reach of further revision. You

may like it, perhaps. For the evening, at least, I shall open no quarrel with it. I only point out the fact that it is as alien from the Puritan temper as is that of the careless observer of society from that of the heroic reformer; as was that of Erasmus from that of John Huss; as that of the "free lance," in the Middle Ages, bold and skillful, but ready to follow any banner which paid him best, from that of the perhaps mistaken but always chivalric soldier or knight, who would fight to the death for church and crown.

On its intellectual side, this fairly exhibits the Puritan spirit.

2. An intense sense of the authority of righteousness

But also, with this intellectual temper, is associated characteristically, in this spirit, an intense sense of the authority of righteousness, as constituting the imperative law for mankind, only in obedience to which is it possible to realize true human nobleness and beauty.

Here again, you observe, it by no means follows that that which is conceived to be righteous is so in fact, or is so fully. Men's moral judgment of particulars, in action or in habit, may be widely and diversely mistaken. It is

apt to be variously shaped and shaded through the impressions of early instruction, of external influences, of transmitted prepossessions, not unfrequently through the force of an unsuspected self-interest turning the delicate indicating needle from the true North; so that courses of action seeming right to some shall be to others ethically offensive, and even the crimes of one state of society shall appear virtues to another. Thus, in our time, slavery has been assailed and defended, with equal vehemence and with equal tenacity, by those in whom was the Puritan spirit; as in other days the divine right of kings, and the duty of regicide, have alike found supporters among them. No special code of formal regulations belongs, distinctively, to the Puritan spirit.

But that which *is* peculiar to it is the conviction of a law of righteousness, the omnipresent, superlative, and unyielding law in the universe of mind, before which self-interest must be silent, against which the power of human passion vainly breaks, in conformity with which human laws have justification and vindication, and find their only secure support. Theoretically, of course, Cicero had recognized

this in what Lactantius called the "almost divine words" of the *Republic;* as did Seneca afterward; as Plato had done before; and as Sophocles had put into the lips of the doomed Antigone the recognition of the "unwritten and immovable laws of the gods," eternally vital, which no mortal may justly transgress. But the peculiarity of the Puritan spirit is that it affirms this with tremendous emphasis, undertakes to test everything by it, and is determined to force it into practice, whatever happens. The Puritan is constitutionally, always, the incarnate conscience of his time; and, as one of our present illustrious guests said, in substance, fifty years ago this week, in an Address which *was* an Oration, in the city of New York, "It was Conscience in the Pilgrims which brought them to these shores; inspiring a courage, confirming a resolution, and accomplishing an enterprise, for the parallel of which men vainly search the records of the world."[1]

This temper brings one, as a matter of course, into elemental conflict with those who hold that the law of the state, or the custom

[1] An Address delivered before the New England Society in the city of New York, December 23, 1839, by Robert C. Winthrop. Boston: Perkins & Marvin. 1840.

of society, is the ultimate rule; which is simply equivalent to saying that there is nothing higher in the universe than "the low-hung sky of Time;" with those who affirm, too, that what is for a man's profit and pleasure is always permissible, certainly if involving no damage to others; with those who hold that any ideal law is a matter of poetic fancy and ethereal illusion, and that practical maxims, like those of Poor Richard, derived from economic experience, are the true guide of human life. Neither of these ethical tendencies has anything whatever of the Puritan in it.

But when one affirms an invisible law, — "*vera lex*," as Cicero says, "*recta ratio, . . . diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna*," [1] —

[1] "Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna; quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat; quæ tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest: nec vero aut per senatum, aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus: neque est quærendus explanator, aut interpres ejus alius: nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis; alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex, et sempiterna, et immutabilis continebit: unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus, ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator; cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernatus, hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiam si cetera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit." De Repub. iii: 17.

Lactantius' words are: "Dei lex, quam Marcus Tullius in libro de Rep. tertio pæne divina voce depinxit." Div. Inst. vi: 8.

above all human rule and custom, which he is eternally bound to obey, and whose sublime precepts he must accomplish, whatever the cost and whatever the result — there is the essential Puritan spirit. The man may be absurdly mistaken in particulars; the circumstances and the drapery of his life may be sumptuous or mean; he may be on the throne, or brooding alone in sterile fields; his name among men may be anything you please: but his moral temper is always the same, whether in heathendom or in Christendom, in the middle age or in this age, in Massachusetts or beyond the Pacific.

That moral temper associates him with many from whom in other things he stands widely apart. You see it in Stuart Mill as clearly, perhaps, as in any old stoic; in Emerson, and in Whittier, whose recent birthday the country honored, as in any early New England divine. The law of righteousness, dimly discerned, perhaps, but affirmed without debate and applied without flinching — that is the element. Goethe spoke to Eckermann, you may remember, of his dislike for a too tender conscience, which tended, he thought,

to fix men's moral view on themselves, and to make them hypochondriacal; and elsewhere, in a passage of his autobiography, he congratulates himself on having left behind a certain anguish of conscience, with the altar and the Church, to all which he felt himself thenceforth superior. But Goethe, with all his many-sided genius and his surpassing accomplishments, was as little of a Puritan — with the possible exception of Alcibiades — as ever set foot upon the planet.

It is noticeable, too, that with this intense sense of the authority of righteousness, comes naturally, though not universally, a profound assurance of a Personal Power at the head of the universe, who is working for righteousness, and who means to make it triumphant in the world.

3. A profound assurance of God's righteous rule

Of course this is the Biblical idea, on which all promises and provisions of the Scripture are based and set. But it is by no means universally accepted, even among those who daily walk beneath the light of the Scripture. Many feel, practically, in our time as in other times, that substantially the present course of things is to go on to the end — industry,

commerce, war, crime, pleasure, punishment, following each other in ceaseless succession; sometimes right uppermost, and sometimes wrong, even as now; that education will be widened, inventions multiplied, wealth increased, but that the old tangle of experience will remain, with the same confused elements contending in it, till the completion of the history of mankind.

The Puritan is he who looks for the absolute final dominion of righteousness on the earth, without which society never can be perfect, through which alone true welfare can be reached, in which the earth shall be illumined and morally crowned; who looks for this because he believes there is always One, at the head of the Universe, intent on this end and sure to achieve it. The moral argument for God is essentially supreme with such a man. The ethical quality is to him the highest in the Most High. To hear God described as "the sum of natural forces," or as a being of power and skill, with no sovereignty of an eternal righteousness in him, is to such an one the final offence against reason and conscience. God is sublime to him, not so much because

braiding the light, or launching the lightnings, or bending the heavens in an arch of circles which no telescope can search, as because he accepts righteousness as the law; and his government is august because he will make this universal. Here is the key to the Puritan theology, wherever that has appeared in history. Here is the dominant note in the personal Puritan life. It is a determining fact in character. It associates souls in a mystic and wide communion. Men may call such a man Quaker or Catholic, Cavalier or Roundhead, heretic or believer: he is as truly of the spiritual Puritan stock as if he had fought with Cromwell at Naseby, had faced the flame with the cheerfulness of Ridley, or had worshiped in the earliest and rudest huts of the Plymouth colony.

4. A profound sense of the dignity of man

I have specified three elements in the Puritan spirit. A fourth one must be added: a profound sense of the invisible world as the immortal realm of righteousness, and of the dignity of the nature of man, who is constitutionally related to that, and to the righteousness which is sovereign in it.

The dignity of man's *nature*, I say, you

observe. This is by no means to be confounded with any high estimate put on his *character*. On the other hand, the higher one's estimate of his nature, in its inborn relationship to righteousness and to God, the sharper will be, usually, his criticism of himself, and perhaps his moral condemnation of others. It is the man of Epicurean life and thought who thinks too lightly or too highly of himself, having no noble ethical standard by which to try his moral life. The austere judgment of one who reveres God as righteous will strike with sharpest and hardest stroke on all conscious folly and sin; and despair is apt to be nearer to such an one than any self-exaltation. But the estimate of the human personality is wonderfully different in the Epicurean, to whom life is only a holiday-game, and in the Puritan, to whom it is an arena for sublime struggle and heroic achievement in the service of righteousness. "Bury me with my dogs" is a saying which has sometimes been attributed to Frederick the Great, as he drew toward death. It might have been said by him, though probably it was not. To the Puritan the very body is sacred, as having been the shrine of

that personal soul which is allied with the immensities. In himself, as in others, he recognizes profoundly supernal relations.

Man is to him naturally a great person; with great powers for discerning the truth, and serving the cause of a divine justice; on a solemn and divine errand in the world; constitutionally affined to invisible spheres, and to Him who is supreme amid them; not far beneath the level of celestial intelligences; to whom it is natural that there should come divine teachings, and even present divine impulses; for whom no miraculous intervention is too amazing to be believed; before whom arises the great White Throne. Differences of human condition are little. The question of more or less culture, of more or less success in the world, is of no account to one who looks thus on the nature of man. The personal soul, in castle or cabin, in palaces or in chains — that is the supreme thing on the planet; for which, indeed, the planet was builded and is maintained; by the presence of which the earth becomes a vital and a significant part of the universe which has God in it, with ranks and orders of intelligent spirits. For this the Cross

was set, under shadowed heavens, on the amazed and quaking earth. Above this are opened the gates of light.

This honor for the soul, as related to God and to the holy and bright Immensity, is as essentially as anything else a characteristic force and element in the Puritan spirit. Masson gives a perfect illustration of it when, in his Life of Milton, he describes the great poet, at his graduation from Cambridge in 1632, two years after some of our ancestors reached these shores, as characterized by a solemn and even an austere demeanor of mind, connected with which, he says, was a haughty yet not immodest self-esteem, since he recognized himself as an endowed servant of the Most High, and was accordingly daringly resentful of any interference, from whatever quarter, with his complete intellectual freedom. That was precisely the Puritan spirit. Even the portraits of Puritans show it, whether by Van Dyke on the other side of the ocean, or by Copley on this. Men have thought of this temper as wholly subdued, if not overwhelmed, in its unquestioning reverence toward God. His authority it has not doubted, because his character has arisen before

it, glorious in holiness. But it has been the most imperious temper of the world in its assertion of man's independence, as responsible to God; as already by nature what he would make it morally, by operations of grace, his son and heir. This is the temper in which the Scriptures have been studied; in which preaching has become the great function which it has been in the Puritan congregations — whether performed in the Genevan gown, or in the surplice, or in neither. This is the temper in which learning has been cultivated with incessant assiduity; in which Harvard College was established, in the midst of extreme poverty and weakness, to become the vast and opulent university in which to-day the land rejoices, and from which it takes a beautiful renown. Such enthusiasm for learning never will cease while the Puritan conception of man's nature continues.

V
Deficiencies in the Puritan Spirit

We have noticed some principal elements in the Puritan spirit. Let us observe, and with equal care, some grave and palpable deficiencies in it. To it belong, not unnaturally, the defects of its virtues, and the roughnesses of its strength. It is not easy for any man, or

any body of men, to have the armor of righteousness equally and fully on the right hand and on the left. And the evident deficiencies or faults which appear in connection with the Puritan temper are such as to excite, among multitudes of men, a very vigorous dissent and dislike. They are often assailed with the sharpest and most contemptuous ridicule, are sometimes encountered with the fiercest animosity.

1. Want of interest in things esthetic

One of them, certainly, is a want of interest in things esthetic; in the products of fancy, of artistic genius, of dexterous skill, in what has it for its office to add the ornament of beauty to life. It is not by accident that the Puritan spirit has been often iconoclastic, shattering statues or burning them into lime, melting in furnaces the rich and precious monumental brasses, shivering the loveliest stained glass as if it were frost-work on the window, cutting pictures in pieces, and once, at least, offering twenty thousand pounds, as it is said in my family tradition that a Puritan did to Oliver Cromwell, for permission to burn the pile of York Minster.

Not for the Puritan, in his reserved and haughty consciousness of supernal relations, is

the dainty sumptuousness of color, the symmetric grace of molded marbles, the rhythmic reach and stately height of noble architecture, the pathos and the mystery of music. His spirit has been too intense, his mind too heavily charged with urgent and imperial themes, his will too set and strenuous for achievement in the world-battle to which he feels himself engaged, to allow him to pause upon things like these. They have seemed to him glittering and deceptive gauds; tinseled shows, hiding the sun; products of the pleasure-loving part of man's nature, not ministering to truth and righteousness, and to man's supreme welfare. He has therefore dashed them before him as frail things, of no moral worth, and liable even to be dangerously alluring.

He has not remembered that to some minds a relish for what is lovely in fancy and in art is as native as color to the violet, fragrance to the rose, or song to the bird; that God's own mind must eternally teem with beauty, since he lines with it the tiny sea-shell, and tints the fish, and tones the hidden fibres of trees, and flashes it on breast and crest of flying birds,

and breaks the tumbling avalanche into myriads of feathery crystals, and builds the skies in a splendor, to a rhythm, which no thought can match. It has been a narrowness, though a narrowness that has had depth in it, and that has not been merely superficial and noisy. And it has been a narrowness for which the Puritan has suffered, in the diminution of his influence in the world, and in the darkening of his fame, more than others for conspicuous crimes. I recognize the fact, and have no contention to make against it, though I can not but regret it with all my heart.

2. Contempt for minor elegancies of life

It is obvious, too, that with this disesteem of things esthetic has been often associated a foolish contempt for the minor elegancies of life, of letters, of personal manners, and of social equipment, with sometimes a positively dangerous disdain of the common innocent pleasures of life.

Unquestionably, and for the same reason, — its intensity of conviction, its supreme devotion to what it conceives as the absolute righteousness, — the typical historic Puritan spirit has had in it something harsh and rigid,

repellent, indeed, and almost relentless, toward the minor refinements of thought and speech. It is too downright, and determinately insistent, to give sympathy to these. There have been, as there will be, signal exceptions; elegant scholars, accomplished artists, noble gentlemen, to whom a delicate courtesy was an instinct; but, constitutionally, the spirit which I am broadly describing does not specially care for what is charming, graceful, picturesque in society. The dainty humor, the choice epigram, the sparkling *persiflage* of the salon are not at all within its sphere. It is so essentially predetermined to great ideas, and majestical purposes, that these things appear to it slight, evanescent, of no real account. Its very wit is sharp, if not saturnine, has a gleaming edge, and is meant to serve practical uses. And toward the pleasant enjoyments of life it is apt to take an attitude almost cynical, in which there is both folly and peril.

Not everything is true, we know, which has been said of it in this regard. Household pleasures have been familiar and delightful in Puritan families. The Thanksgiving festival, — a kind of secular Christmas, — now happily

naturalized throughout the land, has been one of the products of the Puritan spirit, rising like a majestic date-palm from amid the gleaming ice of New England. But certainly its conception of life on the earth has always been that of a battle and a march, under watchful heavens, toward superlative issues, with great destinies involved. And so disdain of the soft and pleasant things in life has never been unnatural to it. It fears in them a subtle seduction from nobler aims, perhaps sometimes suspects this where it does not exist; and for itself, it would be always girded and armed, and shod with swift sandals, for righteous strife.

Of course there is much in this which, to the general feeling of the world, is wholly unlovely; and there is much, it may not be denied, which involves a positive moral danger. For pleasure, so it be innocent in itself, is not a mere sedative or emollient to the spirit. It is absolutely re-creative, as the very word "recreation" implies. Within reasonable limits, it is that which keeps the moral temper sound and sweet, which refreshes the will when it is weary, and reinforces it for invigorated action, making the face of the sternest man to beam

and shine with a radiance from within. Any ascetic intolerance of true pleasure, or any habitual indifference to it, tends to moodiness, or even morbidness, of mind. It tends to self-isolation from a world whose playfulness and whose pleasantness are distrusted; from a world which is regarded as one to be refused and conquered, not to be enjoyed. It has tended, indeed, sometimes at least, to worse effects still, to a wild and fierce license, coming in reaction from it, and as a final alternative to it. It is not monasticism alone which has shown these effects. There are passages in the history of Puritan families which almost luridly illustrate the same. The modern gay insolence of youth was of course never tolerated in the Puritan society, even when it took much milder forms than that which angered the ancient bears. But sometimes, also, the glad and comely pleasure of youth was too little regarded, was too sternly repressed. The effort to expel nature with pitchforks is not often successful. One may, perhaps, cap a geyser with stone, but look out then for more formidable jets! And it is a fact which has philosophy in it, that the most reckless profligates

whom our history has known have come, sometimes, from the saintliest and the most scrupulous households.

3. Lack of affectionate sympathy with questioning minds

Another defect is still more vital: that toward the more delicate sensibilities of the soul, especially as they appear in minds disturbed, unsettled, and questioning, and in hearts reaching tenderly forth for stimulation or solace, there is often a lack of affectionate sympathy in the Puritan spirit. There is even sometimes a hard and oppressive intolerance toward such.

Certain great ideas have authority for that spirit, and it feels and declares that they should have for all. The immutable laws of righteousness must go on, though a million hearts are bruised before them. There is, not unfrequently, among minds which are not of the finer and superior order, a prodigious confidence in purely logical processes, as availing to solve the highest problems which can be presented to human thought. Even the Cambridge Platonists, with their sympathizers at Oxford, were regarded in their time, and have been regarded since by the commoner minds, with a certain disfavor, though the honored

name of Emmanuel College was above them. The spiritual intuition of truth, the sublime views of it which appeal immediately to a spirit in holy fellowship with God, are apt to command too little respect from the downright and practical Puritan mind. An inference, to that mind, is as certain as a vision. It sees no shading, and tolerates no internal hesitation. "Logic is logic. That's what I say" — as in the wonderful "one-horse shay."

There is at times, no doubt, something hard, imperious, dictatorial, in this spirit. It is not as sensitively gentle and responsive, as discerning and patient, toward diffident souls as was that of the Master. It repeats his denunciatory words toward the strong and the haughty, more easily than his affectionate ministry to the questioning and the sad. It catches the roll of the thunder from Sinai, and makes it reverberate over the centuries, more readily than it adapts itself to the loftier office of wiping all tears from every eye.

One of the most striking modern instances of this spirit, among literary men, has been in Carlyle, who did not accept many Puritan doctrines, but whose Scotch blood seethed with its

temper in every microscopic globule; and in whom sternness, rather than sweetness, was certainly the prevailing trait. Sarcastic jeers at human infirmity were oftener on his lips than words of compassionate sympathy with it. A nation, to him, was "of forty millions, mostly fools." And while multitudes of minds have been seized and stirred by his well-nigh prophetic words, as by almost no others spoken in our time, a sad soul, teased with questionings, troubled and tremulous in anxious solicitudes, crying like a child in the night for help, would hardly conceivably have gone to him. In a lonely grief any one of us would, I am sure, have appealed far sooner to men with not a tithe of his terrible genius.

In more or less distinctness, we see the same thing widely in history. The Puritan temper is strong and stalwart. It grasps great themes, confronts great oppositions, and reckons with great issues; but it is not essentially gentle, tolerant, sympathetic, tender, intent upon leading men with delicate hand out of tangles of doubt, out of weakness and fear into spiritual tranquillity, out of sadness into peace. It is too affirmative to be wholly sympathetic; too

surely related, in its intense consciousness, to the supreme circles of the universe, to regard as it ought the weary and timid and half-despondent. So multitudes of men resent and hate it. They scoff at and scout it, and would put it, if they could, in a perpetual pillory of history.

Mrs. Stowe has touched this, again and again, with her unsurpassed delicacy and strength, in some of her sketches of New England life. Perhaps no one of us, in whose veins flows the blood of the early immigration, could go back to the start in his family history without finding examples. The sensitive minds, the minds in which the moral dominated the logical, — the imaginative, and especially the feminine minds, — were often oppressed with terrific self-questionings, in the shade of the woods, in the comparative loneliness of life and its austere stillness under the solemn and silent stars, and in face-to-face view of the mystery of the future. An introverted thought started surmisings which it could not silence and could not expel ; and Satanic suggestions seemed sometimes impalpably to lurk amid the shifting and darkling shadows of un-

tracked woods. The cases were certainly not uncommon, in which no ministry, save of logical deductions from what were esteemed theological *principia*, was addressed to such minds; in which, indeed, their suffering lasted, sometimes deepening into utter despondency, till cleared and dispersed in the supreme illumination of death. I do not hold the Puritan temper directly, or certainly universally, responsible for this; but it has a defect in this direction which no fair mind will forget or conceal.

VI
MAGNIFICENT QUALITIES OF THE PURITAN SPIRIT

But if such are its deficiencies, which we may not hide, let us not forget that it has also certain magnificent qualities and superlative traits, which surely we ought, as well, to recognize. In times of great trial, amid the tremendous emergencies of affairs, these are certain to appear.

1. A masterful sincerity

It has, for one thing, a masterful sincerity. If any fineness of literary form is not a matter of importance to the Puritan, as it usually is not; if he fails to appreciate the subtle charm of modulated sentences, the finished luster of choice aphorisms, or the iridescent interplay of humor, this splendid and powerful grace of sincerity belongs to his temper, and gives it

a dignity impossible otherwise. Men may charge him with sternness, and with being too little regardful of others; but he is not apt to be temporizing in policy, ambiguous or diplomatic in forms of expression. Naturally his spirit hates the stucco which would represent stone; and while it will not be anxious, perhaps, to gild iron columns, or to crown them with acanthus leaves, it will insist on their being iron, and not a frame of painted wood.

I do not think men can anywhere be found whose words have squared more absolutely with their convictions than did those of the Puritans of England toward king and prelate; than have those of many on this side of the ocean, in whom was the original Puritan temper, who have set forth conclusions sure at once to be violently assailed. Sincerity, at least, has been in the utterance — such sincerity as Ruskin long ago eloquently expounded as a characteristic condition and element of all great art; a sincerity which, as he says, "rules invention with a rod of iron; which subdues all powers, impulses, imaginations, to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity."

It is a characteristic not of great art alone, but of all great life — this majestic sincerity, which means what it says; which does not evade and does not equivocate; which gives weight to words, simplicity and impressiveness to all forms of action; and which makes the longest uncouth sentences that ever were heard from a Puritan pulpit reverberate with the tone of personal earnestness, as with music of deepest bells. The Puritan statesmanship is apt to be candid. The Puritan laws are sure to have penalties; and if Puritan thought has the impulse and the power to wreak itself on expression in the true poetic form, it makes the poetry glowing and incandescent, shot through with the singular heat and splendor of an upright and fervent soul. For myself, I would rather there were less of elegance and more of sincerity in letters and in life, wherever the English tongue is spoken. If that is a consummation not reached in our time, it will certainly not be because the dauntless Puritan temper has not distinctly assisted toward it.

2. A majestic Ideal

Still further, too, if fancy is not active in the Puritan on lighter themes, he has before his mind a majestic ideal, of a universal kingdom

of righteousness and truth, which is to include all human society, and to shape that society by its supreme laws.

This is essentially the grandest ideal ever recognized in the world; with which no other may be compared. The aim of the Roman Empire, of the Napoleonic, of the Russian, or of the British, has been simply limited and gross in comparison. It passes all other schemes of mankind, as opalescent mountain masses, seen from some fortunate coigne of vantage, surpass the cabins and villages about them. It has appealed, with a supreme summons, to greatest spirits. A refrain from it was in Dante's song, and in Milton's. It is older far than the vision of John in the Apocalypse. A light from it gleamed upon the Hebrew economy. It was this, and nothing else, which the early colonists hoped and strove to realize here, in their narrow and stern surroundings. It is this which their descendants are striving to-day to further and assist, in their costly and cosmical missionary work.

It is impressive to see how, in the early New England, when the distances were great,

the surfaces desolate, when churches were bleak and services austere, and when the Bay psalm-book marked the only troubadour period in the unadorned annals, this vision of the future, in its superlative moral beauty, was the constant poem both of house and of church. Wheresoever it appeared, and left its luster on the life in the wilderness, it appeared, as it still appears to us looking back, an illuminating ideal, impelling to the noblest endeavors, lifting the spirit toward highest levels, rounding the confused and noisy history of the time and of the world with "a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." No other fact is more characteristic of the Puritan spirit, and none, I think, is more significant or more impressive in any exhibition of human temper.

3. A superb and shining courage

It is certainly to be said, too, that if the Puritan spirit is not naturally strong on the side of moral tenderness, it has a superb and shining courage, as well as a capacity for tremendous enthusiasm, and for a self-devotion conspicuous and complete. It is not afraid of what man can do, so long as it feels that God and his righteousness are on its side.

It has been frankly and gladly ready to face not only the fierce charge of cavaliers, but loneliness, exile, the sea and the wilderness, the unknown perils of a soil and an air which civilization had not tried, the cruel craft of savage enemies. It has gone out from happy homes for this, and from lovely surroundings, and has not flinched before the hazard and life-long loss, any more than it had flinched before the frowning face of kings.

It has in it a fortitude which is nobler than bravery, as the current of the stream is mightier in momentum than the sparkles which flash and foam on its surface. Such fortitude belongs to the convictions behind it. It is essentially involved in the assurance of God, of an imperative righteousness, of the universe as one in which the moral order is supreme, and of the immortality in which that order shall be regnant and eternal. So it can not give way, any more than the rock can before arrows or winds or the leap of wild beasts. Whoever has a true Puritan behind him, in any stress of contention and struggle, may know that there is one on whose succor and support he can steadfastly depend. A law of nature is scarcely less muta-

ble. The poise of the planet is hardly more constant. "The Guard may die, but it never surrenders."

4. A triumphant disregard of institutions

And yet further: if this spirit has often too little regard for perplexed and suffering individual souls, it has also a triumphant disregard of institutions, however mighty, however ancient, if they are not characterized by what it apprehends as a divine righteousness, and are not ready to submit to and to serve that.

It is this which has brought this imperative temper constantly into conflict with such institutions, and has made it seem often only ruthlessly destructive. It has in fact been tearing down, to build up on what it could not but hold to be nobler lines. Church hierarchies, state aristocracies, institutions of royalty or of empire, have been nothing to it, except as related to the supreme ends of God's righteous kingdom. Miters and scepters have been paltry baubles before the intensity of its convictions. Pontifical thrones have seemed mere offensive obstructions in its path, to be swept away as the cannon fire sweeps away earthworks and abattis before the shouting onset of an army. Even majority-votes, which to the American mind seem to be specially hedged with divin-

ity, are hay and stubble before its intensity. Individual responsibility is its fundamental law. It *expects* to continue in the minority, till the earth has been renewed to the righteousness of God; and it is ready to wait for vindication and victory in the ages of larger light to come. It is essentially an innovating and a pioneer temper, aggressive and resolute for whatever may lift society forward, toward superior levels, more generous times. As it formerly met pain and persecution, without complaint and without reserve, so now it meets an adverse vote. As it denounced prelates aforetime, and set its foot on the neck of kings, so now it attacks any interest of society, or any organized institution, which seems to it opposed to righteousness; and it is never to be satisfied till such an institution has been overthrown. "First pure, then peaceable," is its favorite maxim; and the terrible strength of an intense purpose is always behind its moral attack.

It needs the guidance of highest wisdom, and may well offer the considerate prayer of the Scotch divine, "Be pleased, O Lord, to guide us aright: for thou knowest that, whether we be right or wrong, we be very

determined." But no man can make or face an issue with this Puritan spirit without doing well to count beforehand the cost. I see the danger involved at this point; but I see, as well, the temper which has rectified a thousand intrenched and haughty abuses, and has made the world far lovelier to live in; and I will not forget the lowly graves from which it has sprung, when enjoying the harvest of our more free and fruitful society.

5. The clearest vision of things celestial

Yet one thing more. If the Puritan spirit is comparatively careless of pleasant things on earth, and is apt to fear them as too dangerous allurements, it has the clearest and surest vision of things celestial, and draws from them solace and strength, and high inspiration.

It is not a temper which works for wages. Men have heaped all manner of scorn upon it for maintaining, here and there, that a man should be willing to be damned in order to be saved. I admit the justice of much which has been said. No test of that unscriptural sort, fabricated by metaphysical logic, ought ever to be presented; and this one is offensive in many special ways. It is not even harmless, as the man thought the end of the thermome-

ter might be, which he had bitten off and swallowed when it was testing his temperature, though he could not perceive that it was doing him any good. A test like this famous one dishonors God, by assuming that he can be willing to condemn one who seeks to turn in penitence to him; and it confuses and bewilders the mind which is reaching after him in the person of his Son. It is justly repulsive to modern thought, and it never was favored by any large number of even the exacting Puritan divines. But it must be remembered, in absolute justice, that it represented precisely the state and attitude of mind in those who first proposed it as a question; and that never until one does not care what may happen, in this world or the next, so long as he does right, is he finally and utterly free of the Universe, with all his powers in perfect poise and grandest play. If righteousness required it, and the glory of God under the gospel, they who offered this test were willing to face infernal fires; and they felt that others should be so too. Their primary error undoubtedly was in transferring a transcendent, an almost superhuman attitude of mind, to the beginnings of

Christian experience; in requiring from the babe in Christ what might possibly, at least in exceptional cases, have been accepted by the sublimely impassioned missionary or martyr.

But while such absolute submission to God has been encouraged, and been even required, the Puritan thought has always been fixed on the supreme and celestial results of a divine life upon the earth, and has kept before it the radiant consummation of the eternal plan of the Most High. The Apocalypse has been to it the favorite book of all the Scriptures. The sunset-splendor has been no more evident to the physical eye than the Heavenly City has been to the heart. The Cross of Christ has been interpreted by its relation to those issues of life beyond all compass of human thought; and the mission of the Comforter has been felt to be to bring an earnest of wisdom and love, of spiritual peace and of holy power, only fully attainable in the illustrious sphere of the immortals: as if blossoming branches had been flung from over the walls of paradise; as if fragrant odors had secretly stolen between the gates. The earth itself has become a sacred place to men, with this high expectation arch-

ing its bow above the household, turning darkness to day in the dreariest life, and lighting the hills and bathing the sandy or rocky shores as in the up-spring of the immortal morning! The waste and the wood have been to such only the wilderness which men were taking, as Lady Arbella Johnson was said to have taken New England, on the way to heaven. Over the rudest letters and life of the early colonies brooded this ethereal splendor. Their very funeral hymns throbbed with the impulse of the great expectation. The living Puritan, like the dying Stephen, not unfrequently saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God; and his face, too, was to those around him "as the face of an angel."

VII
The Puritan Spirit Cosmical

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have spoken frankly, with too great slightness and rapidity of treatment, but with such a treatment as the circumstances of preparation have allowed me, of the elements involved in the Puritan spirit, as that has appeared not here alone, but at large in history; of its deficiencies, or positive faults, which even its admirers have to recognize; and of the sovereign qualities and traits

which it also exhibits, and exhibits with most commanding force in critical times, and in the front of great emergency. It can not be needful, then, to argue that this temper has not been local or provincial, but in the truest sense cosmical; not limited to any one period in history, but common to all, and sometimes appearing most remarkably in those that were most unfriendly to it. It is as old as history; and it always has shown itself with clearest manifestation in those of noblest nature and power, who have done the most memorable work for the world. Men have made kings out of rubbish, and statesmen, so called, out of pedants and rogues. They have tried, at any rate, to make scholars out of those too lazy to work, soldiers out of padded uniforms, philanthropists out of cranks. But it takes a strong man, and a sound one, to be developed into a Puritan; as men forge cannon out of grim metal, and do not fashion them of *papier-mâché*.

Puritanism has its sources and its securities in the supreme elements of human nature; in the discerning and imperative conscience, which affirms right as the ultimate law in the

universe of mind; in the intuitive reason, which declares the certitude of invisible truth; in that divine side of the soul which is in direct correspondence with its Author, and which sees the eternal justice and might on the field of human combat, more clearly than in any roll of the earthquake, or any far-shining figures of the stars. It has its strength in that commanding will-power which is ready for effort, endurance, consecration, which finds opposition an incentive to achievement, and before which resistant forces or circumstances, whatever they may be, have got either to bend or to break. In these great powers the Puritan spirit finds always its roots and reinforcements. And, therefore, wherever these have been shown, it has appeared; wherever these are to be shown hereafter, it will appear, till the earth and the heavens shall be no more.

1. In the Old Testament

Moses was a Puritan, — in fact, the sublime exemplar and type of the Puritan spirit; who could not speak in the phrase of courts, and who knew that he could not; but to whom Pharaoh, against God, with whatever chariots and horsemen and rock-built temples, was no

more than a temporary bulrush of the Nile against atmospheres and suns; to whom the law of righteousness, the kingdom of the Holiest, the divine intervention for the guidance of his people, were as fleecy clouds, inlaid with fire, moving before him to lead the way and burnish the stern and rocky path; who was just as strong against popular rebellion as he had been against imperial threat; who bowed submissively to that divine will which sent him to die alone upon Nebo, and whom God buried in that austere and lonely funeral, the most majestic of time. It has been by reason of his indomitable Puritan temper, touched of God, that Moses has towered in colossal proportions, before all generations; so that, as Theodore Parker said of him, "His name is plowed into the history of the world, and his influence never can die."

Hezekiah was a Puritan, no one can doubt, whatever temporary weaknesses he showed: who reconsecrated the defiled temple; who swept away, with besom of fire, the lovely high places in which lust was taking on it the semblance and the sanctions of worship; who broke in pieces the brazen serpent, in the most daring and

splendid iconoclasm which the world has seen, calling it in contempt "Nehushtan" — a piece of brass.

Daniel was a Puritan, as well as a statesman and a seer: in the face of presidents, princes, and the king, when the decree had gone forth against prayer, before watchful eyes, and with the fierceness of lions near, going into his chamber, with its windows opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day kneeling, praying, and giving thanks, "as he did aforetime."

Jeremiah was a Puritan: with rough raiment, ascetic habit, hated by people, priests, and kings, flung into prison, eating bread of affliction, and with tears for his drink, yet standing against wickedness like a brazen wall; with a faith unfailing buying the field on which the invading host was encamped, to demonstrate his certainty that again it should be possessed by Israel; his life a long martyrdom, his death, perhaps, a furious murder; yet bearing witness always, without impatience, but with no bated breath, to the truth of the Most High. One does not wonder that so many of the devout among our own Puritans

sought a chrism of his majestic spirit, in naming after him their precious firstborn.

In fact, to state it in a word, the whole Old Testament is vital and commanding with the examples of the Puritan spirit. It is not here and there, alone; it breaks to light at multitudinous points, as the sunshine through vapors, as the silver-gleams through all rifts of the rock in the wealthy mine. It was this which made the venerable Testament so dear to our fathers, and so familiar. We read it, perhaps, with daintier and reluctant eyes. But they, with their more virile temper, their experience of hardship, in their secluded homes in the wilderness, saw in the ancient Testament not history only, theology, or praise, but the glory of man reflecting and celebrating the glory of God. It was a Scripture in life which smote and stirred their strong emotion. Not merely as to Deborah under the palm-tree, or to Ezekiel by the river of Chebar, was the majesty of the Eternal manifest to them. The whole Hebrew economy bore its radiance, and declared its effect; an economy stern, sublime, working for freedom because binding to God; training men to be

careless of the world and its lusts, that they might be champions for the kingdom unseen. This was the lambent cloud of glory which filled all Puritan temples when the ancient Scriptures were opened within them. This made a presence-chamber of the Infinite in each Puritan home.

2. In the New Testament

We may not say that the Master was a Puritan, any more than we may apply to him any other of the special and divisional names known among men, his spirit being wholly sublimed and complete in perfect wisdom and perfect love. But this energetic and magnificent element was certainly in him, as shown by his attitude toward Pharisees and rulers, by his magisterial declarations of truth, and his terrific predictions of the judgment to come. The Puritan has never found anything hostile in the temper of Christ, though he might sometimes have been attuned by that temper to a more benignant and winning grace.

In John the same strong element appears, with all his temper of mystical love, and that lofty spiritual intuition of truth which has made his Gospel a source of perpetual wonder

and delight to all sympathetic and lofty minds. His first Epistle is alive with its power; and it was an unswerving Puritan hand which traced the terrible crash of conflict in which righteousness conquers, and empires go down, till out of heaven descends in triumph the city of God.

Paul was a Puritan, *par éminence*, in his view of truth and in his practical temper, in his hardihood of will and his vehement affirmations, and in his magnetic readiness for battle, on behalf of the convictions at which the Greek laughed and the Jew was enraged. Wherever this spirit has appeared in the world, since his head fell on the Ostian road, it has turned instinctively to his Epistles for instruction and incitement. His spirit has spoken in all the words which have smitten like cannon-shot upon powerful abuses.

3. In Secular History

Outside, altogether, of the Biblical history, such examples appear. Men speak sometimes as if this spirit had been peculiar, or at least most familiar, to those of the Hebrew times and training, or, in modern years, to those, perhaps, of the English stock. Not at all. It belongs, as I have said, to the strong forces

of human nature, and has appeared, therefore, wherever these have vitally emerged; among those of Hellenic or Romanic lineage, of Gothic or of Celtic, as signally and impressively as anywhere else. It is, in fact, everywhere apparent in history, as one traces the glistening metallic threads in an ancient tapestry, which impart to it of their strength as well as of their sheen, and, while adding to its luster, preserve it from being torn apart. One can not imagine Rameses a Puritan: the haughty Egyptian, who knew not Joseph, who made the life of the Hebrews the cement of his walls, and whom the charming Miss Edwards pursues with her delightful persistency of scorn for his sins against the monuments. Yet to one who has any faith whatever in physiognomical indications, it is startling to see how his kingly face, reappearing from the mummy-folds of three thousand years, seems to prophesy the face, set and stern, with a deep trace of sadness in it, of the hardest-thinking New England farmer, looking out from his windy hill-side on the solemn problems of life and of the world.

But Aristides was unmistakably a Puritan, whom Plato eulogized as having righteously

fulfilled his trust: unsurpassed in justice, ostracized on account of it; holding high office, commanding armies skillfully and bravely, not leaving enough of worldly wealth to pay for his funeral. The magnificent statue in the Museum at Naples, supposed to be of him, remains in my thought, and I doubt not in the thought of many others present, as one of the grandest embodiments ever made, in yielding and responsive stone, of high intellectual dignity and power, with a moral elevation unsurpassed among men. Pericles was distinctly *not* a Puritan, though a far-sighted statesman and an eloquent orator; fortifying Athens, giving magnificent impulse to art, and setting the shining diadem of the Parthenon on the brow of the queenliest city of Time.

Epictetus was a Puritan: the freed slave who felt himself in relationship with God and with the universe; to whom palaces and emperors were a trivial pageant; who was consciously here on a divine errand; who felt the touch of the Over-soul upon him; whose maxim was to "suffer and abstain." Cicero was not, in spite of his high and attractive

speculation, his elaborate eloquence, his dazzling accomplishments, perhaps never surpassed among men.

In his theory of life, Marcus Aurelius had strong Puritanical tendencies, as had all the nobler and wiser stoics — Seneca himself, in his ethical writings. The Epicureans were always at the opposite extreme.

4. In Ecclesiastical History

How often the same temper has appeared in the Church, from the first age to the present, I need not remind you.

Basil was an illustrious Puritan, though of sensitive genius and an admirable culture: who enjoined the three peremptory vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; who feared not the imperial forfeiture of his property, because he had none, nor any banishment to inhospitable regions, since he was everywhere the guest of God; and who said, in practical effect, when the brutal deputy in Cappadocia threatened to cut out his liver if he did not obey an offensive order: "Thanks! You will do me a favor. Where it is, it has bothered me ever since I can remember."[1] There is the essential Puritan temper, which it is no more easy to

[1] Vita S. Basilii, chap. xxxi, v. ep. Greg. Naz.

break down by assault than to burn the Ægean, or to upset the Apennines.

Athanasius was a Puritan: ruling councils in the interest of what to him was divine, not with

"The imperial stature, the colossal stride"

of mere titular kings, but with the subtler and mightier force of a moral energy which almost none could withstand, and to whom the imperial tyranny which drove the Church from Alexandria was, as he said, "a little cloud, that will soon pass." Augustine was another, writing quietly that "City of God," which has been a favorite in all generations of Puritan families, amid what seemed the imminent crash of a falling world.

Hildebrand was a Puritan (Gregory VII), strange as it seems: who strove with all the prodigious strength of genius, devotion, and unconquerable will, to purify the Church according to his conception of purity; and who could honestly say, when he died at Salerno, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore now I die in exile." Anselm was a Puritan: Archbishop of Canterbury, father of scholastic theology, who would rather

be a brother in the cloister than a prelate in the Church and an officer of the realm; whose friends were frightened by the ascetic severities of his life; and who was accustomed to say, in the temper of the most unrelenting of New England divines, that if he saw sin on one side and hell on the other, he would jump into the latter to escape the former![1]

Bernard was a Puritan: who lashed the luxury of convents, and the glittering pomp and pride of churches, with an unsparing hand; who admonished kings and pontiffs to think of themselves as stripped and unclean before the coming judgment of God; who was an absolute iconoclast toward pictures and ornaments, with the jeweled candelabra which towered in churches; and who valued the soul of the poorest peasant above all wealth of royal treasures.

Wycliffe, Savonarola, Huss, Zwingli — Puritan traits are apparent in all; in the Huguenots of La Rochelle and among the Cevennes; in the Hollanders, pursuing with equal and

1 "Conscientia mea teste non mentior, quia sæpe illum sub veritatis testimonio profitentem audivimus, quoniam si hinc peccati horrorem, hinc inferni dolorem corporaliter cerneret, et necessario uni eorum immergi deberet; prius infernum, quam peccatum, appeteret." — Eadmer: De Vita S. Anselmi, lib. ii, 16, D.

incomparable faith and wrath their heroic battle of eighty years, for the land which they had redeemed from the sea, against Spain and Rome, and the fierce Inquisition.

5. In the Pilgrim Fathers

It was the same spirit, and no other, among our fathers in England, which led them to endure persecution there, and many of them to cross to this continent of unsubdued forests and unexplored wastes, to plant the small colonies which should be the foundation of great Commonwealths, with what they deemed truth and righteousness for their rule. The true place of the founders of New England in the history of the world is given them by the fact that this spirit was in them. We value them for what they did. We should honor them more for what they were. There were hypocrites among them. The common temper was not, of course, equally or fully exhibited by all. They made many mistakes. They were often, no doubt, harsh and unlovely. It is easier, perhaps, to honor some of them now than it would have been to live with them then. But the essential and powerful temper which had been in Moses and in the prophets, in Paul and in Stephen, in illustrious stoics and in

THE PURITAN BY ST. GAUDENS

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great builders and reformers of the Church, was also in them. Because of it, they take their place among the morally illustrious of the world. They stand unabashed, and in spirit undimmed, in the most illustrious succession of Time. Because of it, till the continent disappears, their fame can not fail from the records of men. Because of it, their holy and happy renown will be immortal on high! Woe be to us, Ladies and Gentlemen, if ever we fail to remember them with honor, or to contemplate their part in the history of mankind with admiration and a triumphing praise.

A monument has been raised to them at Plymouth, on a spot near which they landed. It is wholly fitting that another be raised, as is now, I learn, proposed, on the site of their departure from the old world to the new. The two should stand as answering towers — Martello towers, commemorating hearts that were as resonant iron, and words that were hammers; between which the unfailing wires of reverent remembrance shall bind not Delft and Plymouth alone, but all the hearts fearless of man, and steadfast for righteousness, in both the continents.

6. In early New England

This was the Puritan temper in New England in the earlier time. And, really, the secret of their strenuous struggle with Baptists and Quakers was in the fact that in these they encountered the same spirit which was in themselves, under special and differing forms of faith; so that it was fire fighting fire, an almost irresistible force striking an almost immovable obstacle. It was the crossing of blades of Toledo, with different etchings and embossings on hilt and scabbard, but neither inferior to the other in the temper of the steel, or in the sharpness of edge and point. No wonder that sparks flew like flashes out of surcharged opposing clouds, and that the ringing clash of those unsurpassed weapons still echoes in history.

The same indomitable Puritan spirit survived the early colonial times, always seeking not to decorate life or to ornament society, but to assert personal freedom under God, and to innovate for righteousness, leading the march toward better ages. It sought always to lay foundations, to build vast walls, and then was ready to leave it to others to tone and color them, and set the pictured glass in the windows.

Samuel Adams was a Puritan, if ever there was one: son of a deacon in the old South Church; carefully trained in his father's ways; of whom Hutchinson said that, though he was poor, such was his inflexible disposition that no office could bribe him; whom Gage excepted by name from his offer of pardon to penitent rebels; who raised and ruled the eager democracy of the town and the state, and to whom Washington was no more than another, if he did not succeed.

Colonel Abraham Davenport was a Puritan: who sat in the governor's council at Hartford on the extraordinary dark day, May 19, 1780, when chickens went to roost in the morning, and cattle came lowing from the fields, when a pall of darkness swept through the sky as if the sun had been suddenly extinguished, and when the Day of Judgment was tremblingly thought to be at hand. The House of Representatives had already adjourned, and it was proposed to adjourn the council. "The Day of Judgment is at hand," said the Colonel, "or it is not. If not, there is no occasion for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Bring in the candles."

Samuel Hopkins was a Puritan: who wrought with the utmost energy and patience of his acute and laborious mind to vindicate the ways of God to man; who, on behalf of the enslaved African, fought that enraged aristocracy of Newport whose splendid wealth had on it, to his eye, the infernal scorch of cruel oppression; and who, in the midst of utmost poverty, held his spirit aloft in communion with God, and in an almost seraphic meditation.

7. In recent days

It is only true to the facts to say that the same spirit appeared afterward in those who differed widely from his faith, or from any accepted and articulated scheme of the New England fathers. The intensity of conviction, of which I have spoken as characterizing Puritanism, is an intensity of individual conviction. It may therefore make comparatively little, as often it has made, of general creeds, or of any systems to which others have agreed. It affirms the opinions held at the time by the personal mind, and is sometimes almost ready to say, with the Quaker to his wife, "All the world seems queer, Sally, except thee and me; and thee is a little so." While devoted, there-

fore, to its own conclusions, it can not escape the responsibility of leaving each following generation to do its own thinking, and to come to its possibly antagonizing convictions. As a system of thought, the Puritan element enters into alliance with diverse theories. As a spirit, it survives strange vicissitudes of opinion. So it was that Unitarianism had under it its fair opportunity — was almost certain to appear at some time, and with the old temper to try to project the new and attractive scheme of speculation into the thought and life of society. Not a little of the spirit which had preceded him appeared in Channing, who had early learned to honor the stoics, and who had taken from Hopkins enduring impressions; who was as bold as he was gentle, cultured, and suave; and who faced slavery, in the Federal-street meeting-house, and in Faneuil Hall, as if he believed in a personal devil, and that this was the incarnation of him. The same, too, was not unapparent in Buckminster, differing so widely in opinion from the father whose spirit was yet ever manifest in him. It is not hard to trace the same element in Emerson, or in

Bushnell, or in Theodore Parker. I may not name some among the living, in whom equally it appears.

Wendell Phillips was a Puritan: supple as an athlete, graceful as Apollo, gentle as a woman among his friends, to whom eloquence was an idiom, and the delightful grace of conversation both an ornament and a weapon, but from the silver bow of whose musical lips flew fiery shafts against whatever appeared to him wrong, and whose white plume shone always in the dangerous van of the heady fight. He had in his veins the blood, and in his spirit the Calvinism, of his first ancestor in this country, of whom it is recorded that having been ordained in the Church of England, and having served honorably in one of its parishes, he would not minister to the Congregational Church at Watertown unless it would reördain him for itself, treating as null the Bishop's rite.

John Brown was in some sense a Puritan, though certainly the sword of the Lord and of Gideon was not wisely wielded by him, and he might have learned more from the Sermon on the Mount than he did from the Decalogue, and from favorite prophets.

Ladies, and Gentlemen, this spirit is by no means dead in the land, though secular success may seem at times to have fettered or dissolved it; though a daintier culture may have made men insensitive, if not positively averse, to its austere dignity and power; though it may almost seem whelmed and buried under the rush of incessant immigration, from lands whose manners and moral life it has not trained. It will surely reappear, if too daring assaults are made on the ancient order and faith of the New England churches, or on that system of public schools which is to us a great inheritance; or if socialistic, anarchic theories seek to minister to passion, to subvert public order, and to conquer, defile, and despoil the continent.

VIII
The Puritan Spirit Still Living

In it is really, as I believe, our assurance of the future. Without it our civilization will rot. All progress in what calls itself "culture" will only make us tender, luxurious, and inert, if this be absent. All simply material accumulations will but make in the end a bigger bonfire, to be touched by the torch of agrarian passion. The nation, without this spirit in it, however plethoric in wealth, how-

IX
The Puritan Spirit our Assurance of the Future

ever boastful of its strength, however famous in the world, will become at last but a bald-headed Samson. It may trust in some ineffectual wig to replace its vanished native strength, but the gates of Gaza will not even tremble before its touch.

But *with* this spirit, affirmative of the truth as God gives us to see it, devoted to righteousness, and to Him who eternally advances it in the earth, seeing the glory of man revealed in his relation to the immensities, and in his essential correspondence with righteousness, and looking for the ages, even here on the earth, in which that is to triumph, for which we are ready ourselves to labor, to suffer, and to endure, no difficulties will be too great to be encountered, and no assaults or perils fatal. The moral life of the nation will then equal its physical might and its great opportunity. Its virtue will not fail, and the iron in its blood will not be found wanting.

X
Our Duty to the Puritan Spirit

Here, then, is our duty plainly before us: not to eulogize this spirit, but to incorporate it, and make it a part of our personal life; not to put it away from us, as something which specially pertained to the past, but to set it forth

afresh in our modern conditions. We may present it in gentler exhibition than it found in the old time. We may combine with it, as we ought, an ampler love of grace and beauty. We may rise, as we ought, to higher levels of spiritual sympathy with differing opinions than were familiar, perhaps possible, to our fathers. We may be more tender toward doubting minds, and more eager to minister to those who are walking, with overshadowed and saddened souls, amid the mighty and mystic problems of life and of the universe. But we must retain the same spirit in ourselves, and make it, as far as our influence goes, generally controlling, organific in the nation, if we would do our work aright. For it is true now, as true in the midst of all the beauty and all the wealth with which commerce, invention, and art surround us, as true in this city of the Puritan's pride and of our admiration, as it was when Paul wrote to the despised disciples in Ephesus, under the shadow of that temple of Diana to which princes were tributaries and whose renown was in all the world — "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

We want the same temper, amid the changed world in which our personal lot has been cast, which has been in those who have stood, in all their times, against corruption in Church or in State, with hearts that no more failed, and brows that no more blanched, than does the granite before the rush of the storm; the same temper which was in our fathers two hundred and seventy years ago, when they left whatever was beautiful at home, in obedience to conscience, and faced, without flinching, the sea and the savage; when they sought not high things, and were joyfully ready to be stepping-stones for others, if they might advance the kingdom of God; but when they gave to this New England a life which has molded its rugged strength from that day to this, has made it a monument surpassing all others which man can build, and a perpetual living seminary of character and of power for all the land; — a life, please God! which shall never

be extinct, among the stronger souls of men, till the earth itself shall have vanished like a dream.

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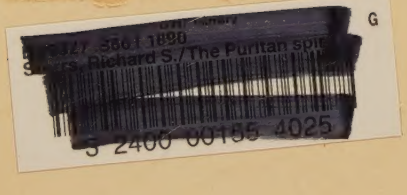
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